

"This is the third time this bill has been introduced," said Farr in his testimony. "But in prior Congresses ocean resource management and conservation was not a priority. This Congress it is and I'm excited to see the bill get a fresh airing before the subcommittee."

HR 21 is based on the recommendations of the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy and the Pew Trust's Pew Ocean Commission. Both commissions undertook extensive studies of ocean resource management across the nation and issued reports for improvements. Working from the commissions' reports and with input from ocean advocates, fisheries representatives and a broad array of scientists HR 21 incorporates many of the recommendations of the two oceans commissions and public interests. The bill is the first real comprehensive oceans management legislation in more than 40 years.

Below is a summary of HR 21.

Title I: Establishment of a National Oceans Policy

- Establishes a national oceans policy "...to protect, maintain, and restore the health of marine ecosystems
- Establishes standards for applying this policy to federal activities that impact the oceans and coasts, and
- Includes an implementation mechanism to ensure that the standards are met.

Title II: NOAA Organic Act

- Establishes NOAA as an agency within the Department of Commerce,
- Includes a section on resource management, and
- Adds Education to NOAA's mission.

Title III: National Ocean Leadership and Coordination

- Creates a system to advise the President on ocean issues and coordinate Federal

agency activities that effect the ocean, and

- Codifies the Committee on Ocean Policy, which has been authorized by executive order.

Title IV: Regional Coordination and Ecosystem Planning

- Establishes a system of regional partnerships for coordinating federal activities that impact the ocean, and
- Establishes a network to share information about the ocean ecosystem in each region.

Title V: Ocean and Great Lakes Conservation Trust Fund

- Creates a pool of money to fund the activities required by this act, and
- Authorizes the money to come from General Revenue, an Ocean Stamp, money that hasn't been spent in previous years, and interest.

Title VI: Administration Funding

- Authorizes NOAA to receive appropriated funds, and
- Allows those funds to be available until they have been spent.